

earls honoured in court and council-chamber, or broken men whom the sheriffs officers would have hanged on the nearest tree, sheltered their armies of retainers in strongholds of size and splendour varying in proportion to their wealth or respectability. The feudal donjons, behind whose massive walls the Bohuns and Bigods had bidden defiance to the Norman Kings, had long since been levelled to the ground or converted into royal castles ; it was even illegal to build a private fortification. But there were numerous ways in which this inconvenient law could be evaded. The most usual was to obtain a license from the King to castellate an existing manor-house, a permission which was sometimes construed into leave to build an entirely new castle. It was by a liberal interpretation of a grant of this nature from Richard the Second, that Sir Edward Dalyngruge, who had made his fortune as a captain in the French wars, built in 1386 the splendid castle of Bodiam out of the spoils he had acquired in Brittany and Aquitaine. It still stands in almost complete preservation in a beautiful valley on the borders of Kent and Sussex, bearing witness to the high state of perfection to which military architecture had been brought in that age. Few who look up at its sheer walls, loopholed bastions, and overhanging battlements, among which there is no gable, or other sign of domestic architecture, would guess that it was a residence built by an English country gentleman on his retirement from service in the wars. Similar places were erected by other captains out of the plunder of French cities and chateaux, and on the model of strongholds taken and lost in France.¹ Even gentlemen of mere peaceable habits and disposition, who did not obtain leave to castellate their manor-houses, built them four-square and surrounded them by a moat, as secluded halls in the bye-ways of England still testify. This precaution was rather proof that those who built them lived in dangerous times than that they necessarily meditated evil against their neighbours.

But the great nobles built on a more generous scale. John of Gaunt's own castle of Kenilworth, the ancestral stronghold

¹ *Bodiam Castle*, by E. Graham Ticehurst, pp. 34-17 j *Scrope and Roll*, ii. 22-24.